

Blues to enter new Anglo- Italian Cup

WYCOMBE WANDERERS, who won the Anglo-Italian Non-League Trophy earlier this season, have accepted an invitation to enter a similar competition involving six semi-professional clubs from this country and six from Italy.

A part of a general revival of Anglo-Italian football relations, this competition is the non-league equivalent to the professional Anglo-Italian League Cup, last won by Newcastle United two years ago. The competition has been devised by Rothmans Isthmian League chairman Barry East and his Italian counterpart Gigi Peronace.

It will be played at the end of the season under sponsorship of Rothmans, the Italian Tourist Board and Fiat Ltd.

The basis of the competition is this. The six clubs from England and six from Italy will be split into three divisions of four teams, two from each country in each division. The matches are purely Anglo-Italian and in Wycombe's case they would not meet English opposition in the competition. The games in England will be played on May 4 and 19 with the return matches in Italy on either June 12 or June 13 and June 16.

The final will be on Saturday, June 19.

The English clubs taking part are Wycombe Wanderers and Enfield from the Rothmans Isthmian League, Wigan and Stafford Rangers from the Northern Premier League, and Wimbledon and Nuneaton Borough from the Southern League. The Italian clubs will be announced at a later date. Clubs from the same league play in the same division.

The divisions will be decided on Rothmans Isthmian League lines with three points for a win

and one for a draw. The English team in any of the three sections that scores the most points (maximum 12) will qualify for the final to meet the Italian club with the best record. If two clubs are level, goal difference will decide.

As in the Rothmans sponsored leagues, there will be a sportsmanship pool and penalty points for bookings and dismissals. Each club has the chance to win £500 for keeping a clean sheet and a booking will mean the club surrendering £100. The cost of a dismissal is £400. There is also likely to be a cash bonus for a clear two goal victory but details have yet to be finalised on that scheme.

The cash awards will help clubs cover the high costs of travelling expenses and a brochure will be given to the clubs competing. The clubs will sell these to help cover expenses. Advertising in the brochures will also bring in further revenue.

Wanderers were one of the first to accept the idea and their invitation stands as another honour to the club. They have already tasted Italian football in their two matches against A.C. Monza in the Trophy. They lost the first leg 1-0 but clinched the trophy with a magnificent 2-0 win in the return leg at Loakes Park. A crowd of 3,500 watched the match.

Further details of the competition will be announced in next week's 'Mid-Week'.